

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

On page 1, immediately after the title, please insert the following heading:

--Background of the Invention--.

On page 1, lines 4 and 5, please amend this paragraph as follows:

The invention relates to an extruder having a transfer region which, in an extruder sleeve, has ribs between which extend flow channels, whereby opposite the sleeve flow channels, flow channels are formed in the extruder screw, and whereby the sum of the cross-sections of the flows channels, when viewed in the direction of extrusion, shift toward the sleeve and then toward the screw, pursuant to the introductory portion of claim 1.

On page 2, lines 6 through 9, please amend this paragraph as follows:

In contrast, it is an object of the invention to provide an extruder ~~pursuant to the introductory portion of claim 1~~, the temperature distribution and homogenization capability of which are improved even with exacting mixtures such as natural rubber.

On page 2, between lines 9 and 10, please insert the following heading:

--Summary of the Invention--

On page 2, lines 10 and 11, please amend this paragraph as follows:

This object is inventively realized in that the ribs of the extrusion sleeve, at the ridge that faces the screw, have a width that is at least one third, in particular at least one half, and preferably approximately 80 to 100% of the width of the flow channels of the extruder sleeve, and in that there is provided between the ridges of the ribs of the extruder sleeve and the screw a gap of more than 0.5%, in particular of approximately one percent of the diameter of the screw. Advantageous further developments are provided in the dependent claims.

On page 4, between lines 2 and 3, please insert the following heading:

--Brief Description of the Drawings--

On page 4, between lines 12 and 13, please insert the following heading:

--Description of Preferred Embodiments--.

On page 6, line 14 through page 7, line 2, please amend this paragraph as follows:

Fig. 3 shows how an inventive shear gap 24 can be configured. With this embodiment, the inclines 26 and 28 are embodied as bevels. Their width is approximately half of the width of the ribs 16 and 20. In this embodiment, the angle of inclination α_s of the incline 26 is approximately 15° , and the angle of inclination α_b of the ~~rib 20~~incline 28 is also 15° . The width of the shear gap 24 is approximately half of the height of each rib 16 and 20, or one fourth of the sum of the heights of the ribs 16 and 20, the heights of which, of course, continuously change throughout the transfer region, whereas the sum of the heights remains constant.

On page 7, after line 6, please insert the following two new paragraphs:

--The specification incorporates by reference the disclosure of German priority document 102 30 118.2 filed July 4, 2002.

The present invention is, of course, in no way restricted to the specific disclosure of the specification and drawings, but also encompasses any modifications within the scope of the appended claims.--